JW

1/12/72

Dear friends, and only a few,

There has been a light benefit to the accident to my thumb. The medication has had me sleeping longer and the discomfort has, from time to time, forced me to stop typing. This morning I have time only for reading before the day's normal activities must begin. I've had less than enough time to think our problem through completely, but I have had some time, so instead of reading I share a few prehaps premature, perhaps incomplete thoughts with you. I do not expect agreement but if anyone can contribute to the thinking, I'd appreciate suggestions as soon as possible.

First of all, the Lattimer play has just begun unless I have been able to forestall what else I know was planned, which I can't articulate, and what I think was planned, which I may. Most of you know the last point because in one way or another I have discussed it with you. I have asked the others to think about it, months ago, for I anticipated it a long time ago. My first effort (unsuccessful because of the refusal of one of us, the only one, who could make it possible, to do anything that would diminish his apparent ambition to go down in history as the man who all along broke the case. This may be an unfair appraisal, it is not intended as unkindness, it may well not have been a conscious concept on his part, but I think it is the fact.

Others were to have followed Lattimer, and not Wecht. My source was one of them. I cannot, therefore, reveal my source. But this put me in a position to record certain demands and appeals, which I did promptly. I rather imagine that when using capital letters slowed me down too much, typing with one hand, the effect on receipt was surprise. But I did these things promptly, for a number of reasons, one being because I think we are in a position to use the law as the most effective immediate counterforce.

Parenthetically, I note that perhaps the greatest tragedy is that POST MORTEM was not available, as it could have been if some of us who could have paid for its printing without any pain at all, with no serious effect on their resources, had been less selfish. Some of you have an idea of the contents, and I think you will not argue. The others will have to await the workings of time. But had this book been printed and then had these baddies pulled their Lattimer ploy, they would have done the job for us with any luck at all. As most of you know, we had an offer, through Ned Crosby (General Mills, Weyerhauser) to pay for the printing of the book in return for his doing a contraction/popularization, which I also much wanted, but he kept changing his conditions to the point where my integrity was involved, he wanted to change the factual, doctrinal and political content and thrust of the work, and it became impossible. I had hoped another of really extensive means would have made what for him is the minuscule investment, but he would not. Meanwhile, Bil and I almost literally exhausted ourselves to complete the preparation for offset printing, which can be done very fast. I will now add a chapter on this latest vile thing.

So, first of all, I want you to know that unless what I have done and other things force them to decide against it, there will be more, not just Lattimer. It is possible that the most hurtful part in the long run will be letting a good pathologist see this stuff. No reasonable people believe or for a long time have believed the Report. In having someone say it is not true we have no great advance or development. The consequences, which I still do not spell out for those to whom I have not, may be much worse. I'd like the others to do independent thinking, and here I note that when I made the same request more than three months ago, I got no single reply.

Jim Lesar thinks, off the top of his head, that I should go back to court on the equality of access provision of the law and regulations. That has made me think of other legal moves, and in the others I have more faith, as I've written Cyril, who will probably not agree. Mention of Cyril brings to mind something I want you to understand clearly. If I were to have had to pay any law firm on what part of this work can be called legal, where I have done my own work, then the cost would have been not less that $25,000. A law firm may have done this more expeditiously and at less cost, but I did it the way I felt it had to be done and that is the time factor alone. The book itself required an enormous

amount of work and what for us in an enormous cash cost. The first part was written before the second wave of books, like Sylvia's and Fink's, appeared and the research began before the appearance of any other that WHITEWASH and Inquest. I can't begin to estimate the cost in meaningful terms, but restricting it to my work alone and estimating that at beginning pay for reporters under Guild contracts in this area, it would be hard to agree to a figure at less than another $25,000 and probably as much as twice that. So, aside from the egos we all have, and I want my own work to be my work, we have this investment I want you all to understand clearly I am not about to give away more than I have (and for those of you who do not know it, the medical stuff in New Orleans was mine, that part having long before then having been completed). I will not, for example, use it now in refuation of anything nor in support of Cyril, unless the book is first printed, and of that there is now no prospect. And I warn you of my opinion: if it is not out and there is access by honest pathologists, we may face the greatest disaster yet, the largest single impediment to the establoshment of truth yet. You should understand the strengthy of my feelings on this. The one stipulation I made with Garrison is that my book be credited. That he did not do. I did other work that became public domain, it has since been quoted by other critics, as in letters to editors for one example, and in no one case has any critic credited this material to its real source. This is not simply an ego matter, it is nuts and bolts. Any one of thise uses had the capability of attracting attention, as by a buff in a position to help or by a daring publisher. Or some politicians, some papers or magaiznes. If I make no claim to being without ego, I suggest that with this thing the real ego problems lie elsewhere. And to give it perspectuve, let me ask you to consider two things: even postage stamps remain a serious problem for us, and I have recently taken a trip of more than three weeks, with no income from it. Most of the expenses were paid by Bud, for whom I did some work. Mary kept me in Dallas, and that well indeed. But how many of you look forward to three weeks or hard work in which you get the return of your subway or bus fares? Or have lived thiis for eight years? So, regard less of what you may think of my determined refusal to give any of this work away when others of us could have made it availabe as a book and failed and refused to, these couple of things may give you inkling of my position and feelings. There never has been any book I wrote from which there could have been or was any profit, measured as these things usually are in our society. You know what not to expect of me if we get into a harder crunch, which is possible.

Let me return to some thinkin on the Lattimer business. There never was a time when there was <u>less</u> need to make this stuff available. I have a few beliefs about why, but I am not confident any one or any combination accounts for it. Consider that in all only four people applied and one, clearly, is unqualified. Not counting me. My first application was the first of November 1966 and subsequent repeated demands for parts, inclusing in court. Only four in the entire country? What a tiny interest this represents. There were no ringinf editorials, no clammor or any kind. So, we should be asking why it was done without need, and about the timing. One possibility. Teddy's legtimiate fears, I think unworthy of serious thought. You should know that Marshall gave his word that he would not permit what he in fact did-and then left the country. I get more and more interested in that cat. And the selection of Lattimer defied rational description. His ignorance and his incompetence or so great they can't be put in comprehensible terms. But the average, intelligent layman who has read a fair amount of the available literature has a greater knowledge. He is so unconcerned and so unaware he hasn't yet realized the extent of his self-defamation, of he may not be concerned about it. We also must learn more about him, and the preliminary indications are that he has interesting connections. But the manner in which the government handled this is provocative. They got the expectable large play with an exclusive leak to the NYTimes, and a pretty fair electronic play (I saw nothing of any consequence, if anything, on NBC and nothing on NBC-TV, which may not mean that they didn't touch it.). CBS gave it extensive play. But in all cases it was, exceptionally, a one-day story. Even in the Times, to date. As I said and can't now explain, I may have had something to do with it. But I may have had nothing to do with it, and this second possibility is worht considering. It could mean that the other papers are p'ed off. Where we have a friend, one paper and its syndicate has used an extensive story our way. This was by a friend I backgrounded <u>before</u> Lattimer's ugly head showed.

This may have been official intent, as with the Shaw disclaimer, played so cool it was given to only a few papers and then not even as a press release but as a couple of unattributed paragraphs on a plain sheet of paper, without even DJ indentification on it. I can't pretend to know their thinking, but it is clear that they didn't desire a bigger play than they got, or they'd have gotten it. The Washington Post didn't even used the story in their earlier editions on Monday, the day after. In the later editions they used a short thing from Reuters, not even AP or UPI.

But this much you also should know: they expected more stories and made the preliminaries. Whether what I did immediately has influenced this or will I can only guess, but I did do certain things immediately, of which some of you know and have copies. This included the threat of legal action and the prerequisites. In turn, this may delay them only long enough to assess the prospects. They do know now that when I say this I am quite capable of doing it, having done it often enough and having hurt each time.

So, if they abandon what I know they had planned, there remains the possibility of giving Cyril access. I estimate that most of you will think this a great boon because he really is a great one, because he is capable of reading what he sees and knows enough to give it the meaning you want, and it is, in my thinking, immaterial whether he knows enough to detect any fakes. Here I think you should understand that Lattimer either lied and lied grossly in his representation of what has come to be called the rear, non-fatal wound or he didn't see the same stuff others did. So the question of fake now, as distinguished from the panels' times, is not frivolous. I remain, after much thought, persuaded that his saying the stuff disproves the Warren Report will not in the long run make any material difference to us and in that long run will be our greatest single problem to date. I continue to refuse to expand on this to those to whom I have not. We must all give this thought and stop the knee-jerk reactions, those that have showed all being of this character. You should all be thinking why I can think and say this.

I do not think he will agree, but I have told Cyril I think our most important single move now is an injunction in which I seek to prevent any further such exclusive and selective release of what is, really, public information. This should now include a major legal test of the GSA-family contract, among other things. I am almost powerless in this because I am without means. Unless I can get legal help, you should expect that the chances are that I can't do it. But we must get this in a safe context, which it now is not. And believe me or not, neither Chril nor anyone else is going to learn anything of real significance that I haven't already gotten and written and have in PM and I have in it what they can't get from this stuff. What I am saying is that this book NOW has more in it than can be learned from with withheld material and has a proper context. All are priveleged to disagree.

Meanwhile, Lattimer is of considerable interest, as is Marshall. I anticipate little propsect of anything surfacing on Marshall, but Lattimer is still talking, meaning that as of yesterday he had scheduled appearances to make. I think it important that I have every word he says as soon as possible and I ask this of you to the extent you can do it. In turn, this means even wire-service stories that appear in your areas, for they may not appear here and I may not see them. Two to my knowledge are checking into his background, and this is very important. The preliminary indications are that he has a longing for military associations and then with the most reactionary groups only. And now I must get to the normal demands of each day, taking fil to work. Sorry I've no time for more.

Best, HW